

Philip Morris Leaf Storage Warehouses
1717-1721 East Cary Street
Richmond
Virginia

HABS NO. VA-849

HABS

VA

44-RICH

98-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. VA-849
PHILIP MORRIS LEAF STORAGE WAREHOUSE

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VA
44 Rich
98

Location: 1717-21 East Cary Street (southeast corner of East Cary Street and Eighteenth Street).

Present Owner and Occupant: Philip Morris Company, Inc.

Present Use: Warehouse

Statement of Significance: Built as a warehouse in the early-twentieth century, this building stands as an excellent example of the sparingly ornamented yet functionally designed commercial structure of the turn-of-the-century that served as both the forerunner and inspiration for the International Style.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Early-twentieth century.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a chain of title to the land on which the structure was built.
 - 1883 P. R. Carrington conveyed the property to Benjamin T. Crumpa and wife (Deed Book 122C, 481).
 - 1888 B. T. Crump and wife conveyed the property with all improvements to Charles H. West (Deed Book 135B, 134).
 - 1913 Charles H. West and wife conveyed the property to Virginia Bonded Warehouse (Deed Book 222B, 298).
 - 1960 Virginia Bonded Warehouses sold the property with a one-story office building just west of the warehouse to Associated Warehouses, Inc., for \$235,000 (Deed Book 601A, 145).
 - 1962 Philip Morris, Inc. bought the property from Associated Warehouses for \$337,500.
4. Original plans and construction: Not known.
5. Alterations and additions: See Part II.

B. Sources of Information:

Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books and Assessors Records in Richmond City Hall.

Prepared by (Mrs.) Margaret T. Peters
Researcher
17 April 1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The warehouse discussed here is the smaller and more irregularly shaped of two similar warehouses located beside one another in the commercial district of Shockoe Valley. The series of recesses on each front gives this otherwise massive reddish-orange masonry block a lightness and verticality which is counter-balanced by the refined cornice surrounding the whole. The recesses and piers also give the building a monumental yet passive character--one reflecting the function of the building, a storehouse in which no regular activity takes place.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: East wall, approximately 94 feet 5 inches; north wall, approximately 88 feet 5 inches excluding elevator shaft and addition; west wall, approximately 60 feet; south wall, approximately 93 feet 9 inches; elevator shaft projection, approximately 20 feet 7 inches deep. East front: 9 bays wide by 5 stories high.
2. Foundations: Brick (no basement).
3. Wall construction: Brick, common bond. The building's structural system consists of exterior exposed brick piers the whole height of the building with curtain walls between, in which the windows are located.
4. Framing: Wooden joists set in brick walls. As there are no interior supporting partitions on any level, the floors are supported by rectangular wooden posts or columns with chamfered corners, which diminish in thickness on each ascending level. Because of the trapezoidal shape of the building, the number of posts from north to south at the eastern end is five, while at the western end the number diminishes to three. From east to west the number of posts is eight. The post distribution is constant for all five levels.

5. Porches: There is one exterior projecting loading dock on the south side. A loading platform also extends from the projecting elevator shaft on the west.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The exterior doors are metal, of functional design. Two exterior doors are located on the north wall in the fourth and sixth bays from the west. An exterior door is located in the center bay of the south wall, and a vertical sliding door is located in the rear of the elevator shaft.
 - b. Windows: Virtually all the windows throughout the building are treated in a similar manner. Each window (except for a few on the second floor) has the lower section of the void in the form of a recessed brick panel with a rough-cut stone sill below. The window opening itself is nearly square and is topped by a segmental brick arch. The sash is one-by-one pane with metal muntins, rails and stiles.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Asphalt-coated flat roof hidden behind parapet. Surface of the roof undulates in sections to promote drainage.
 - b. Cornice: Very shallow, very simple corbeled brick cornice above which is a low unornamented parapet capped with tile coping.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Each floor has a similar plan following the trapezoidal shape of the building. Each floor consists of one large storeroom with the elevator shaft and stairwell projecting from the main body of the building on the west side.
2. Stairways: The one stairway is located in the exterior projection on the north side of the elevator shaft. The stairs are undecorated wooden (pine) steps with no balusters or risers, but with a handrail.
3. Flooring: The first floor has a poured concrete floor. All the upper floors have light hardwood floors, possibly maple, with random-width floor boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior is unfinished, having brick walls and exposes floor joists. All levels are treated similarly.

5. Doors and doorways: Doors are functional, generally undecorated metal with no architectural treatment or purpose.
6. Decorative features and trim: None.
7. Notable hardware: All hardware typical early-twentieth century type.
8. Lighting: Electric lighting throughout, naked bulbs spaced at regular intervals in each ceiling.
9. Heating: Building is unheated.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: The building is located in the busy commercial district of Shockoe Valley. Elevated railroads and a highway pass very near the building, but good views of the east front are obtainable from the intersection of Main and Eighteenth Streets.

Prepared by Calder C. Loth
Architectural Historian
Virginia Historic
Landmarks Commission
17 April 1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the Richmond Photo-Data Project, undertaken in 1967 by HABS in cooperation with the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. During the period from July, 1967 to October, 1969, records were made of 11 historic structures in Richmond. The project primarily recorded examples of the cast-iron commercial architecture for which the city is known, though other building types are also included.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. James W. Moody, Jr., Executive Director, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, directed the operation in Richmond. Professor Paul Delaney of the University of Virginia School of Architecture assisted in the selection of subjects covered. Historical and architectural data were furnished by Messrs. Tucker Hill and Calder Loth, Architectural Historians of the Commission's staff. Photographer Edward F. Heite, also on the staff of the Commission.